OVERNIGHT GUEST

By BEN AMES WILLIAMS

W.N.U. FEATURES

THE STORY THUS FAR: Adam Bruce, FBI operator, Inspector Tope and Mrs. Tope met in the Maine woods. Tope found a man murdered at auto camp operated by Bee Dewain. He was believed to be Mr. Ledforge, head of New England utilities. Ledforge's friend was found in hospital with head injuries. His chauffeur, Kell, was found, admitted that he hit Holdom on head, upon Holdom's orders. Said he did not know where Mrs. Kell was. Joe Dane, assistant D.A., returned with Holdom and learned from handyman Priddy that a woman and man had been there at time of murder and the man was called Rupe, which might have been Ledforge, as his name was Rufus.

CHAPTER X

He admitted: "Matter of fact, I thought there was two women in there. I thought she said 'Ruth,' till Earl here told me it was a man and a woman."

Joe took both men in his car back to his home in North Madderson. Here were vital witnesses; he meant to keep their information to himself for a while.

"And you stay here," he directed. "Don't talk to anybody till I come for you, or send for you. See?"

He went back to the courthouse, where Pringle still held his vigil over Holdom. "He's been asleep most of the time," the detective reported. "Seems kind of dopey. Don't say a word."

Joe nodded. "I've got a hot trail," he reported "Have you heard anything from Mat?"

"Why, yes," Pringle told him. "They got that car out of the quarry. Telephoned for Will Banion's ambulance here a minute ago. Mrs. Kell was in it. Dead."

Joe nodded again, loftily. "Naturally," he agreed. "Well, I'll run out there, take charge."

He made speed toward the quarry. Beyond Dewain's Mill, in the front seat of a car stopped at a filling-station there, he saw Tope sitting alone, his head bowed, apparently asleep. But Joe did not stop. He had no desire to share with this interloper his discoveries now. . . .

Instructor Tope did not see Joe Dane pass by; but the old man, though his eyes were closed, was not asleep. Yet he might have been excused for being. He had slept not at all for many hours.

When Bee, the night before, took Mrs. Tope away to see her safe abed, Tope led Adam up to the cabin where Whitlock and Beal were housed, and knocked on the door. Whitlock and Beal were still awake.

"I talked with your boss, boys," Tope told them directly. "Take my word for that? Or do you want to get him on the phone?"

Whitlock consulted Beal with a glance, and Tope added: "I know who put you on this. Charley told me. He said you don't know."

"No," Whitlock admitted.

"Charley gave me your reports up to yesterday morning, the last time you called him up. I'll run through them if you want, show you I know what I'm talking about."

Whitlock surrendered. "Well take your word for it," he said.

Tope nodded. "All right. But the party that put you on the job in the first place says you can quit now. But I need you, and Myers says you're to work with me. O.K.?"

Whitlock grinned. "I've heard a lot about you, old man. Glad to watch you operate. What is this business, anyway?"

Tope for a moment did not answer. Then he said heavily, half to himself: "If it's what I think it is, it's about as bad a thing as I ever ran into." And he added grimly: "Unless I'm clear off the track, there are three people dead already—and if we don't watch ourselves, more to come. You boys come along."

They set out in two cars, Whitlock and his comrade trailing; and Tope said to Adam:

"Go to that lodge, son. I want to see Mr. Eberly."

Adam assented. "Hurry?" he asked.

Tope shook his head. "It's late already," he pointed out. "He'll be asleep, anyway. We'll have to wake him up; and we're staying with him till daylight, so take your time."

"Right," Adam assented. "See if you can go to sleep. I'll try not to give you a bumpy ride."

Yet with the best of intentions on Adam's part, that drive through the night was still an ordeal of narrow bed woods roads, missed turns and consequent doublings and difficulties. It was past four o'clock in the morning, and Adam was grimly cursing Bee Dewain's idea of distances and of direction before they came at last to a gate she had described—and found it locked. At Tope's direction, Whitlock and Beal stayed here with the cars while Tope and Adam went on, trudging along the winding way. Insensibly a gray light came stealing through the wood.

"Daylight," said Tope. "Well, we've time enough!" And he asked: "Adam, got your gun?"

"Yes. Why?"

"Kell may have brought some one up here that he didn't tell us about," said Tope, and said no more. Then they came to the lodge—low, sprawling, built of logs, with an outlook to the west across the tumbled crests of distant wooded hills like tossing billows. A car was parked by the door; and door, and some windows, were open.

Mr. Eberly came out to meet them, and remembered Adam, and said gravely: "I heard your car. Sorry the gate was locked." He smiled in faint mirthless fashion. "More trouble, Bruce?"

"Not for you, sir," Adam told him; and he introduced Inspector Tope, leaving it to Tope to explain their presence here.

Tope handed Eberly that letter from Ledforge. "Miss Dewain thought you'd want it," he said. "As long as it's this afternoon Mr. Ledforge wants you to meet him."

Eberly read the letter swiftly; he looked at Tope. "Miss Dewain showed this to you?"

"Yes sir," Tope confessed; and he said briefly: "Mr. Eberly, I don't want to try to tell you all that's happened. If I told you the story, you'd think more about the questions you want to ask than about the questions I'm asking you. Mind if I don't start explaining at all?"

Eberly was white and still. "What is it you want to know?"

"Why, that's fine," said Tope contentedly. "You know Mr. Ledforge pretty well, don't you?"

"I'm probably his most intimate friend." Eberly glanced at Adam.

"He will be here some time today."

"Mr. Bruce has of course told you of the bank's collapse. Ledforge securities were in large part responsible. But Mr. Ledforge had advised me against carrying so much of his stuff. He believed in it himself, but preferred that I should not commit the bank so heavily. It was my own decision, my own responsibility."

Tope nodded. "Knew his family, do you?"

"Miss Ledforge, yes. There is no one else."

"You and he used to go fishing together and so on?"

"Yes, and still do. Fish and hunt. Or sometimes just come up here and rest for days on end."

Tope looked around reflectively. And he asked: "Mr. Eberly, come down to Ledforge's place with us, will you? I want to see Miss Ledforge, and I'd like to see that fish pond of his. I'm a fisherman myself."

"Certainly," Eberly agreed. "I'll get some clothes on." He had come in slippers and dressing-gown to greet them.

At Tope's suggestion, they left Eberly's car here and walked back to the locked gate, roused Whitlock and Beal, sleeping wearily in their car, and so got under way. Eberly told them they need not go through Ridgcomb.

"There's a back road," he explained, "that comes down past the fish pond. A locked gate, but I have a key."

When their ring was answered, Tope asked for Mr. Ledforge.

"He's expected this afternoon, sir," the servant replied.

"Then Miss Ledforge?"

Miss Ledforge received them at the breakfast table; and Adam thought there was some shadow in her eyes; yet she smiled in a friendly fashion, and spoke to Inspector Tope, remembering his call two days before.

"My brother hasn't come yet," she explained. "He will be here sometime today."

Tope said slowly: "Why, that's what I hear, Miss Ledforge." And he said: "We're from the Myers Agency, you see."

Her cheek colored faintly. "Oh, that absurd proceeding!" she exclaimed. "I should apologize for troubling you." And she explained: "It was my ridiculous solicitude. You see, my brother wrote last week that he was ill, was coming home Friday." She hesitated. "He never took proper care of himself; and when he didn't come as he expected, I was concerned." She laughed softly. "He was so amused, when I told him what I had done. Told me to—call off my dogs! So I telephoned Mr. Myers."

Adam saw Whitlock move as though to speak, knew what the other was about to say. It was early Friday morning, before she could have known that her brother had not come home as he planned, that Miss Ledforge had set these men upon the trail. But Tope touched Whitlock's arm, restraining him; spoke himself instead.

"Well, ma'am, that's all right." And he added: "I want to leave Mr. Whitlock here. He's expecting a phone call from Mr. Myers. Can he stay?"

"Of course," she assured him; and then Tope was saying good-by.

Outside, the old man said crisply: "Whitlock, you and Beal stay here till you hear from me." And he added: "Your job is to see that nothing happens to that old lady."

"Happens to her? What—"

"I don't look for anything," Tope admitted. "Your being here will prevent. But—you stay."

And he turned and with Adam by his side strode toward the car. Whitlock, gaping with bewilderment, swung away to where Beal waited in the other machine.

At the Mill, Bee and Mrs. Tope were here to greet them. After the first moment, Bee caught Adam's arm, drew him aside.

"What's happened?" she demanded softly. "Where have you been?"

"Lost in an impenetrable forest," he assured her, chuckling. "When it comes to giving a man directions, you're a total loss. What were you trying to do, get rid of us for good and all? We didn't find the lodge till daylight."

"Idiot!" she protested. "You didn't listen! But it's hours since daylight. Where have you been since? And why did he bring Mr. Eberly here? And what did you find out?"

"Well," he said, "we called on Miss Ledforge. It was she who put Whitlock and Beal on this thing, because her brother wrote her that he was sick."

"But that doesn't make sense—" She had no time to shape another question. Tope was coming toward them, and he called to Adam:

"All right, son! Let's go!"

He climbed into the car. "Where to?" Adam asked, and Tope said in a mild impatience:

"The quarry, man!"

So Adam drove down the road toward Ridgcomb, till he came to that byway which led up into the hills where the quarries were; then turned aside and began the steep climb.

Adam asked: "You feel sure this is the Holdom car?"

But Tope reported in an impatient tone: "It's bound to be! Go along."

When they reached the ledge above the quarry, Mat Cumberland came to meet them; beyond, Adam saw half a dozen men engaged in the task here under way. Cumberland said in slow bewildered tones:

"Tope, Kell told the truth. Our dead man can't be Ledforge! There's a story in the New York papers today that Ledforge has made a complaint to the governing committee of the Stock Exchange about Holdom."

"No, Ledforge isn't dead," Tope absently assented.

Adam pressed closer, as intent as the District Attorney to hear what the old man's answer would be; but Tope gave them no enlightenment. "I'll know a lot more two hours from now," he said. "But till I'm sure in my own mind, I'd rather not do any guessing." And he added reassuringly: "But Mat, if I'm on the right track, we'll have all the dirty linen washed and hung out on the line by tonight." He took the big man's arm. "Now come on. Let's see what they're doing here."

They turned along the ledge and Cumberland said: "The newspapers have got the story, Tope. Got reporters on it. I looked for some of them to be up here before now."

Tope stopped in his tracks. "We don't want that! Quill here?"

"Over yonder," Cumberland assented; and Tope saw the trooper, kneeling on the lip of the ledge to look down into the quarry pit below, and called to him. Quill came toward them; and Tope said quickly:

"Son, go down the road and keep the reporters from coming up here—if they find out where we are."

"Oke," Quill assented. "I ran into them once already today." And he reported: "I found the Holdom limousine, Inspector. Number plates gone, but it's the one, all right. Hid in the woods. There's blood on the floor rug in the rear seat." He chuckled. "I sent the reporters up there. They couldn't make anything out of that."

Tope nodded. "You looked it over first?"

"Nothing in it."

"Look at the tools?"

"No. Why?"

Tope said: "There was probably blood and hair on one of the wrenches. Unless Holdom kept his hat on. But no matter. Did you see—the girl I sent you to see?"

"Not yet. Tried twice, but there wasn't anyone at home."

"Well, after we're through here, find her, see what she says, come and tell me," the old man directed. "Think you can hold the reporters off our neck?"

(TO BE CONTINUED)

IMPROVED UNIFORM INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL Lesson

By HAROLD L. LUNDQUIST, D. D.
Of The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago.
Released by Western Newspaper Union.

Lesson for February 3

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FEAST DAYS OF A PEOPLE

LESSON TEXT—Leviticus 20:7, 8; 23:4-6, 15, 16, 24, 27, 28, 34, 39-44.

GOLDEN TEXT—The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad.—Psalm 126:3.

God wants His people to enjoy their religious life. Being in fellowship with Him is not something to dampen one's spirits, but rather to give joy and enthusiasm full liberty. Even with Israel in those early days when Christ had not come and they had only the promises and types of His coming, He arranged for regular religious feasts or festivals which brought the people together to worship Him.

One can well imagine the delightful fellowship as friends, acquaintances and especially relatives from various places went up to the feast together. Personal joy was heightened by the great spiritual joy which they shared.

The obvious lesson for us is that we who know Christ and have peace and liberty in Him should enjoy our Christian anniversaries to the full in a manner well-pleasing to Him. We need such occasions to renew our faith, to quicken our joy, and to cause us to remember God's grace and His blessings.

The first of the assigned Scripture passages does not directly relate to the feasts of God's people but rather speaks of:

I. The Holiness of the Lord (Lev. 20:7, 8).

God is holy and His people in their earthly walk are to show that they have been sanctified by Him. This involves a separation from worldly practices and an eagerness to do the will of God.

Keeping the statutes of God should be the delight of His people, not a burden or a trial. There is real liberty in conformity to law. Holiness makes for freedom and fruitfulness.

Now we turn to the consideration of the feasts of the Lord. In selecting the verses, two of the feasts were omitted, so we shall include Leviticus 23:3, 9-12 with the others assigned.

II. The Feasts of the Lord (Lev. 23:3-6, 9-12, 15, 16, 24, 27, 28, 34, 39-44).

This is one of the great chapters of the book of Leviticus, presenting both practical and prophetic teaching. The holy "feasts" and the "set times" of Israel (which we shall consider under the one heading of "feasts") were for their spiritual instruction and edification, but they also reveal God's prophetic purpose for both Israel and the Church.

1. The Sabbath (v. 3). This is not strictly considered one of the feasts but a set time—a holy convocation to be held after six days of labor. It is the type of the rest that God has in mind for His people. (See Heb. 4:1-11.)

A word of admonition is in order regarding America's awful disrespect for and misuse of our day of rest—the Lord's day. Is it not time we did something about the desecration of Sunday?

2. The Passover and the Unleavened Bread (vv. 4-6). These could be considered separately but they are closely related. The Passover spoke of the Lamb of God who was to shed His blood on the cross, even as it pointed back to redemption by blood on that dark night in Egypt (Exod. 12:12, 13).

The unleavened bread speaks of holiness. This is not the result of "servile work" (v. 8), but a showing forth of faith in the offering by fire.

3. The Firstfruits (vv. 9-12). Just as the one sheaf was waved before the Lord as the earnest of the harvest, so Christ in His resurrection is the firstfruits of them that sleep in the grave. (See I Cor. 15:20-23.) Note that it was waved "on the morrow after the Sabbath" (v. 11) which is the resurrection morning—our Sunday. What a blessed thought!

4. Pentecost (vv. 15, 16). Fifty days after the feast of firstfruits came a new meal offering; two wave loaves are presented before the Lord. This new meal offering speaks of the believing people of Christ, and so it came to pass that it was on Pentecost that the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Church (Acts 2:1-4), just fifty days after the resurrection of Christ.

5. Trumpets (v. 24). This looks forward to the day when God shall call His people Israel in the latter days. This will bring them together for the great day of

6. Atonement (vv. 27, 28). On that day Christ shall take away the sin of His people (Zech. 13:1), and they shall be prepared for the crowning and joyous feast of

7. Tabernacles (vv. 34, 39-44). This was the great feast of ingathering of the products of the year. Israel then dwelt in booths to recall their days in the wilderness. It was a time of full rejoicing, when sorrow and crying were put away. It is the type of Israel's ultimate restoration and full blessing.

Such are the feasts of the Lord—delightful and faith-stimulating—for Israel and for us!

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—•—

Put ground allspice, cloves, mace and nutmeg in shakers on the table and let the folks choose their own spices on their desserts.

—•—

Place a piece of wax paper directly beneath the dresser scarf. Then should you spill perfume—nothing serious.

—•—

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